

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-05 ISO-00 /016 W

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P 110330Z DEC 73

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1124

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS PFOR

SUBJ: VISAS FOR PRC

SUMMARY: CHINESE HAVE NOT YET AUTHORIZED VISA FOR TDY
BF/DO OFFICER. ALTHOUGH REASONS FOR DELAY NOT CLEAR,
WE SUSPECT THIS IS CHINESE WAY OF SEEKING QUICKER ACTION
ON OUR PART FOR ISSUANCE VISAS TO CHINESE TRAVELING
TO THE US. END SUMMARY.

ACTION REQUESTED: SEE PARA 6 AND 7.

1. ON NOVEMBER 23, USLO SENT MFA NOTE REQUESTING
AUTHORIZATION FOR PRC EMBASSY IN KUWAIT TO ISSUE VISA
FOR TDY BF/DO. WHEN WE WERE INFORMED BY KUWAIT ON
DEC 5, THAT PRC EMBASSY THERE HAD NOT YET BEEN
AUTHORIZED TO ISSUE VISA, US OFFICIALS RAISED THE
QUESTION WITH MFA CONSULAR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL DURING
MEETING DEC 6.

2. OFFICIAL IRST RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO
MATTER AT CLOSE OF MEETING. FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS
OF OTHER CONSULAR ITEMS AND JUST PRIOR TO END OF MEETING,
USLO OFFICIALS REITERATED THEIR REQUEST FOR EARLY ISSUANCE
OF VISA. TO THIS SECOND REFERENCE CHINESE OFFICIAL SAID
"NO DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN."

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3. CHINESE HAVE GIVEN US NO INDICATION WHY THEY HAVE

DELAYED ISSUANCE OF WHAT SHOULD BE ROUTINE VISA. TWO POSSIBLE REASONS COME TO MIND: FIRST, THIS MAY BE THE CHINESE WAY OF INDICATING THAT THEY WOULD LIKE USLO TO ISSUE VISAS MORE PROMPTLY IN RESPONSE TO CHINESE REQUESTS. SECOND, NOTE REQUESTING TDY BF/DO ALSO INCLUDED REQUEST FOR VISA FOR TDY ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER FROM HONG KONG.

4. AS TO THE FIRST POINT, WE HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED SPECIFIC TIME FRAMES WITHIN WHICH VISAS SHOULD BE ISSUED. (THE CANADIANS INFORM US THEY HAVE FORMAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE THAT VISAS WILL BE ISSUED WITHIN TWO WEEKS AND THAT THE CHINESE ARE PUNCTILIOUS.) IN REVIEWING OUR RECORDS, WE NOTE THAT EXCEPT FOR COURIER VISAS, WE HAVE BEEN ISSUING VISAS SLIGHTLY OVER TWO WEEKS AFTER RECEIPT OF CHINESE REQUEST.

5. ALTHOUGH CHINESE NOTES REQUESTING VISAS SPECIFY DEPARTURE DATE FROM PEKING WHICH APPEARS TO BE DEADLINE AGAINST WHICH DEPARTMENT OPERATES, THE CHINESE INFORM US THAT ADDITIONAL VISAS ARE OFTEN REQUIRED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. THUS, EVEN THOUGH USLO RECEIVES AUTHORIZATION TO ISSUE VISAS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE DATE, THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR ADDITIONAL VISAS TO BE OBTAINED.

6. IN THE FUTURE, DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO RESPOND TO VISAS BEAR OR VISAS EAGLE/CHIPMUNK MESSAGES WITHIN TEN WORKING DAYS (EXCEPT FOR COURIER VISAS) WITHOUT REFERENCE TO DEPARTURE DATA.

7. WE ALSO BELIEVE WE SHOULD PLAN ON MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS FOR OBTAINING VISAS FOR DEPARTMENT OR REGIONAL OFFICIALS ON ROUTINE VISITS. THE DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO INFORM ALL INTERESTED POSTS OF THIS REQUIREMENT.

8. AS NOTED ABOVE, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT ASSIGNMENT OF HONG KONG CONGEN OFFICER FOR TDY CAUSED THE CONSULAR DEPARTMENT TO BUCK THE QUESTION UPWARD FOR DECISION WHICH NOT YET MADE AND WHICH THEREFORE AFFECTS BF/DO VISA. (AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED CONSULAR OFFICIALS APPEAR TO BE ON A VERY TIGHT STRING WITH NO LEEWAY FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOEHR THAN THE MOST ROUTINE DECISIONS.)

9. BY C.O. B. DECEMBER 10 USLO HAD NOT HEARD FROM MFA CONSULAR DEPARTMENT AND WE INTEND TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN/OCEANIA OFFICIALS AT MFA ON DECEMBER 11.
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